

The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa

**Acts of the
37th Ad Hoc Synod held at the FRC Pretoria
April 14th , 2012**



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Acts Ad Hoc Synod of the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa

held at Pretoria April 14, 2012

Article 1 Opening

Rev. J.J. Drijfhout on behalf of the convening church of Pretoria called the meeting to order. He read Ephesians 4:1-6 (NIV), after which he held a short meditation. He requested all who were present to sing Hymn 5 (Book of Praise). He then led in prayer.

Article 2 Credentials

The credentials were examined and all classes were properly represented.

Classis North delegated:

Primary:

Rev. H.H. van Alten, Pretoria-Maranata

Rev. J. Mhlanga, Pretoria-Maranata

Rev. G.F. Mnisi, Pretoria-Maranata

Elder C. Roose, Pretoria

Elder T. de Wit, Pretoria

Elder F.J. van Dijk, Pretoria-Maranata

Alternates:

Rev. B.A. Matlaela, Soshanguve-North

Rev. D.M. Boersma, Pretoria-Maranata

Rev. P.G. Boon, Pretoria-Maranata

Elder R. Etsane, Soshanguve-North

Elder H. Lubbinge, Pretoria

Elder G. Hagg, Pretoria-Maranata

Classis South delegated:

Primary:

Dr. J.A. Breytenbach, Bethal

Rev. C. Kleijn, Johannesburg

Rev. E. Viljoen, Cape Town

Elder W. van der Westhuizen, Bethal

Elder A. Kuyvenhoven, Johannesburg

Elder H.H. van der Linden, Cape Town

Alternates:

Rev. C.A. van Wyk, Cape Town

Rev. P. Abrahams, Belhar

Elder J.C. du Plessis, Bethal

Elder M.P. de Wit, Cape Town

All primary delegates were in attendance, except for Revs. Mnisi and Kleijn, who were replaced by Revs. Boon and Abrahams and the Elders De Wit and Van Dijk, who were replaced by Elders Hagg and Lubbinge. Rev. Mhlanga arrived later.

Article 3 Election of Officers and Constitution of Synod

The following officers were elected to serve synod for its duration:

Chairman: Rev. H.H. van Alten

Vice-chairman: Elder C. Roose

Clerk: Rev. P.G. Boon

On behalf of the convening church, Rev. J.J. Drijfhout declared synod constituted. The elected officers took their places.

Article 4 Agreement with the Three Forms of Unity

The chairman asks delegates and advisors to rise to indicate their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity. All rise.

Article 5 Housekeeping matters

Minutes: The convening church has appointed br. A.W. Herder, stated clerk, to take the minutes and prepare the acts. The chairman welcomes him.

Article 6 Agenda of synod

The following agenda was adopted:

1. Opening by the convening church.
2. Examination of credentials.
3. Constitution of synod and election of officers.
4. Agreement with Three Forms of Unity by delegates and advisors.
5. Welcome to deputies and advisors
6. Adoption of agenda.
7. Adoption of meeting procedure.
8. Deputies' reports.
 - 8.1. Mission Deputies.
 - 8.2. Deputies ad article 11 CO.
 - 8.3. Deputies ad article 19 CO.
 - 8.4. Deputies Curators.
 - 8.5. Deputies Financial Review.
9. Appointment of deputies and instructions
10. Personal question period.
11. Adoption of acts and approval of press release.
12. Censure ad article 48 CO.
13. Closing of synod.

Article 7 Welcome to deputies and advisors

Chairman welcomes deputies H. Pouwels (Financial Review and Article 11 CO), H. Snijder (Financial Review and MDSA), A. Boon (Article 19 CO) and A. de Lange (Article 19 CO) and invites them as advisors during the deliberations of their respective reports.

Article 8 Deputies ad article 11 CO

Material:

- Report deputies ad article 11 CO (Appendix 1)
- Report Deputies Financial Review (Appendix 3)

Synod decides:

1. To implement the principle that the congregation is responsible for the basic elements of a minister's stipend and that only the non-basic elements will be supported by deputies article 11 CO. Deputies will decide with wisdom on the path and time of the implementation.
2. To use half of the assessment for Curators (R45) for the benefit of deputies article 11 CO over the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 and communicate this decision to the churches.
Grounds:
 - Deputies article 11 experience cash flow problems at present.
 - Deputies Curators have considerable capital funds at present and will likely not deplete these funds within the indicated years.

Synod decides to amend the mandate that Synod 2011 gave to Deputies art 11 CO as follows:

1. To assess the churches for the calendar year 2012 – 2014 as indicated in Art 11 of these Acts.
2. To consider any request for financial support coming from one of the churches and once the merits of the request have been ascertained to send a proposal to the other churches to help the needy church according to ability;
3. That the guidelines as set out in deputies report 2011 be used as a framework for deputies' decision making process;
4. To report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to article 11 of the Rules of Synod.

Article 9 Deputies ad article 19 CO

Material:

Report deputies ad article 19 CO (Appendix 2)

Report Deputies Financial Review (Appendix 3)

Synod decides:

1. That support for new needy students will be limited to the actual study costs;
2. That deputies will phase in the above mentioned decision over a period of time for current students;
3. That the channel to follow when funds are needed to study should be parents, local church and the bond of churches (deputies article 19 CO) in that order;
4. That deputies will encourage students, students' parents and local churches to accept their responsibilities for the students' support;
5. That a reserve fund should be built by deputies ad art. 19 in order to assist possible new students in need.

Synod decides to amend the mandate that Synod 2011 gave to Deputies art. 19 as follows:

1. To financially support only students approved by *Deputies Curators* and according to the parameters set by the churches at synod for the study towards the ministry of the Word, in accordance with article 19 CO and the synodical regulations, including the new regulations from synod 2012;
2. To communicate the revised rules icw needy students to the churches and current and prospective students;
3. To assess the churches for the calendar year 2012 – 2014 as indicated in Art 11 of these Acts.

4. To report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to article 11 of the Rules of Synod.

Article 10 Deputies Curators

Material:

Report Deputies Curators to Synod Pretoria 2011 (See Appendix to Acts Synod 2011)

Report Financial Review (Appendix 3)

Letter of Deputies Curators to Deputies Financial Review (Appendix 4)

Synod decides:

To use half of the assessment for Curators (R45) for the benefit of deputies article 11 CO over the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 and communicate this decision to the churches;

Ground:

1. Deputies article 11 experience cash flow problems at present.
2. Deputies Curators have considerable capital funds at present and will likely not deplete these funds within the indicated years.

Article 11 Report Deputies Financial Review

Material:

Report Financial Review (Appendix 3)

Synod decides:

1. To approve the below mentioned contribution amounts (per member per year) for the next 3 years till the next synod i.e. 2014. There after the proposed differentiated model for contributions should be used if approved by Synod 2014.

Contributions to Deputies per Member (Rands)

Year	Mission	Art. 11 CO	Art. 19 CO	Curators	Church Federation	Total	% Increase
2011	130	220	65	90	20	525	
2012	150	285	65	45	20	565	8
2013	175	295	80	45	20	615	9
2014	190	320	80	45	20	655	7

Ground: The increase per year is slightly higher than inflation but attainable according to the feedback received at the Indaba.

2. To reappoint deputies FRD to continue with the uncompleted mandate given to them by Synod Pretoria 2011 and to report to synod 2014 under the applicable synod rules. This work can include Indabas, meetings with consistories, deputies or other commissions within the FRCSA to enable them to prepare a proper report for the 2014 synod.

Ground:

The short term financial issue has been addressed, but the sustainability of the work within the FRCSA has not yet been addressed. It is of great importance that the various deputies apply their minds towards the collective goal of long term sustainability and work out a strategic plan towards that collective goal.

3. To approve the principle of a differentiated contribution model, based on the contribution ability of the congregations. FRD is mandated to develop a workable contribution model for all the churches within the FRCSA and propose it to synod 2014.

Ground: The present flat rate is not appropriate seeing the differences in wealth and income between churches.

4. That since the majority of the needy churches do not contribute, they should be encouraged to contribute according to the differentiated model discussed at the Indaba as soon as it is made available.

Ground: Needy churches can only request support if they also give according to ability. The present collection contribution model does not work.

5. That Mission points (preaching points) have to contribute to these deputies, using the differentiated model as guidance. This must be communicated to the sending churches.

Ground: Make synod contributions part of mission points from the start as the mission point is part of the church federation.

6. To keep the contribution for Article 19 CO at R65 per member for 2012, and R80 for 2013 and 2014.

Ground: This way a reserve can be built up so to be less dependant on foreign support.

7. To add an instruction to the mandates of MDSA, Art 11, 19 and Curators to communicate information, concerning needed funding to consistories on an annual basis.

Ground: Often consistories are not aware of the needs and shortfalls of the various deputies and cannot put these needs to the Lord and church members.

8. To call on all consistories to cooperate with the FRD to enable them to propose a new model for differentiated synod contributions as from 2014.

Ground: The consistories are ultimately responsible that contributions to the deputies within the FRCSA are made according to each member's contribution ability.

9. To call all deputies to include a properly motivated and sustainable operational plan with at least a three year budget in their synod reports. Criteria such as dependency on

foreign money, the federations own ability to contribute, availability of manpower etc. should play an important role.

Ground: As part of our stewardship, we need to be accountable how and for what purpose we use the financial gifts provided to us. Sustainability can only be considered if all deputies present a proper budget, including running costs and capital expenditure, manpower and the like.

10. To remind all churches to pay contributions on a quarterly basis.

Grounds:

- This has been decided by the previous synod, but churches are not doing it yet.
- This will improve the cash flow and give deputies a more steady income.

11. To change the name of *Deputies Financial Review* to *Deputies Sustainability*.

Ground: The mandate these deputies received from Synod Pretoria 2011 was broader than only finances.

Article 12 Appointments

Synod appoints:

Sustainability (previously Deputies Financial Review)

Br. H. Pouwels (convenor), Pretoria-Maranata; Br. H. Snijder, Pretoria; Br. R. Meeske, Johannesburg.

Synod decides to resubmit the Synod 2011 mandates for the Deputies Curators, Article 11 CO, Article 19 CO and the MDSA as amended by this synod.

Synod reminds deputies of their right to co-opt other people as per Synod decision 2005, article 17.

Article 13 Personal question period

No questions are raised.

Article 14 Adoption of Acts and approval of press release

The executive was appointed to prepare the Acts for publication. The press release will be prepared by the vice-chairman.

Article 15 Censure ad Article 48 CO

The chairman concluded with gratitude that censure ad article 48 CO was not necessary and

noted with thanks that synod could work through the items on the agenda in good harmony.

Article 16 Closing of Synod

On behalf of synod the vice-chairman expressed his appreciation for the capable manner in which Rev. Van Alten had chaired the sessions. The chairman led in closing prayer. The chairman declared synod Pretoria 2012 closed.

Finis

Appendix 1: Report Deputies ad article 11 Church Order

Report to Synod March 2012. – Art 11 – Deputy Needy Churches FRCSA

Introduction:

This report should be read in conjunction with the Art 11 report synod 2011 since the approval of the recommendations requested in that report were postponed to the ad-hoc synod planned after the Indaba held by Deputies Financial Review.

Synopsis:

During the past two decades the European ministers were properly supported and cared for based on Western standards. Unfortunately, we are living in a very diverse country and difference in wealth and income has to be accepted. The norm is “taking proper care” and not to compare stipends within the federation as the norm. Therefore stipends should be based on what the needs are and not what the minister wants. This rule applies to all ministers. It is a biblical principle to support a minister based on the average income levels of the congregation he is serving.

There are however a number of elements of the stipend that are not related to the income level of the congregation and could therefore be supported by the churches via art 11. Basic elements like food, clothing, etc for the minister and his family should be provided by the congregation.

The level of ownership and responsibility of members of a needy congregation is often low. Critical analyses of the history can help us all to focus more on individual stewardship. Despite that, it will be difficult to change the present practises re supporting ministers via art 11 but we have to do it to avoid that we become a needy church federation.

Following the above approaches, the support by art 11 to needy churches will slowly reduce. In addition we also have the objective to be less dependent on foreign support.

We thank our Provider and Owner of all our possessions and gifts that He gave us the means to support the needy churches in 2011 and that the budgeted figures are looking considerably better compared to a year ago.

Soli Deo gloria

Financial overview:

Below is a cash-flow indicating the present situation as well as the expected future figures. Some explanations regarding the figures are mentioned as well.

Overview of Cash flow - Needy Churches - (Jan. 2012)

	Year						
	2009 Actuals	2010 Actuals	2011 Actuals	2012 Budget	2013	2014 Estimated	2015
Saldo/opening balance	R 150 531	R 506 975	R 390 251	R 361 331	R 345 000	R 325 677	R 189 964
Income							
Mission deputies	R 150 000	R 80 000	R 60 000	R 40 000	R 20 000	R 0	R 0
Churches contribution	R 245 900	R 247 300	R 263 000	R 296 000	R 310 000	R 340 000	R 370 000
Donations	R 31 040	R 27 091					
Canada - support	R 268 400	R 328 364	R 300 000	R 300 000	R 300 000	R 300 000	R 300 000
Australia - support		R 184 000	R 420 000	R 420 000	R 420 000	R 420 000	R 420 000
Jan Hulser fund (FRC Bellville)			R 100 000	R 115 000	R 118 000		
Interest	R 26 746	R 41 937	R 20 000	R 12 000	R 8 000	R 8 000	R 8 000
Total	R 722 086	R 908 692	R 1 163 000	R 1 183 000	R 1 176 000	R 1 068 000	R 1 098 000
Expenditure							
Pension Jhb	R 120 840	R 130 830	R 152 220	R 159 831	R 167 823	R 176 214	R 185 024
Soshanguve North FRC	R 93 001	R 168 630	R 190 000	R 190 000	R 180 000	R 180 000	R 170 000
Mamelodi FRC	R 126 031	R 136 836	R 127 200	R 127 000	R 125 000	R 125 000	R 125 000
Belhar FRC*	R 23 900	R 286 800	R 300 000	R 300 000	R 300 000	R 300 000	R 300 000
Johannesburg	R 0	R 100 915	R 0	R 0	R 0	R 0	
Bethal	R 0	R 199 333	R 420 000	R 420 000	R 420 000	R 420 000	R 420 000
Bank charges	R 1 870	R 2 072	R 2 500	R 2 500	R 2 500	R 2 500	R 2 500
Total	R 365 642	R 1 025 416	R 1 191 920	R 1 199 331	R 1 195 323	R 1 203 714	R 1 202 524
Surplus/ (shortfall)	R 506 975	R 390 251	R 361 331	R 345 000	R 325 677	R 189 964	R 85 439
Required work capital (target 3-6 months)	R 137 116	R 384 531	R 446 970	R 449 749	R 448 246	R 451 393	R 450 947
Surplus/shortage in work capital	R 369 859	R 5 720	-R 85 639	-R 104 749	-R 122 569	-R 261 429	-R 365 507
Income for Projects - Manse Bethal							
Australia	R 253 418	R 534 000					
SA Disenchanted fund		R 128 214					
Total (accumulated)		R 915 632					

Positive trends:

The situation is much better than presented in the report to synod 2011 mainly due to the fact that Johannesburg is no longer needy. This has a positive impact and in theory art. 11 can survive till 2015.

Risks

The FRCA (Australia) has committed to support Bethal still for 2012 with an amount of R420000 but expect growth (spiritual and membership) before commitments for 2013 will be made.

The FRC in Canada also do not want to give a firm commitment for a fixed amount, they will try to get the requested R300 000 per annum.

Bethal is dependant on Australia and should support stop or reduce, art 11 has not the means to support Bethal. A contingency plan has to be worked out.

Future support reduction:

The proposal to implement the principle that only non basic elements of a minister's stipend will be supported by Art 11 is not yet reflected in the expenditure figures.

Secondly, only churches that can support the basic elements of a minister should be instituted (if synod accepts recommendation 2). This will ensure that we will not create an even bigger difference between local support paid and local contribution.

Dependency on foreign support.

Art 11 is extremely grateful that our sister churches in Australia and Canada are supporting the FRCSA. At present we are getting \pm 60% of our funds from them. As pointed out during the Indaba, the local contributions are attainable but should be structured differently. However, implementing the basic stipend element approach (described in the previous report) should ease the dependency on foreign money. Art 11 will therefore not search for additional assistance abroad but will maintain current support structures in Canada and Australia.

Budgeted figures:

It is difficult for art 11 to forecast the reduction in support once the principle that only non basic elements of a minister's stipend will be supported by Art 11, is implemented. It is realised that the implementation will take years. However, we trust that this will be accepted and the implementation (which will be done in conjunction of the respective church councils) should steadily reduce the expenditures over time.

Feedback re this implementation will be given in the report synod 2014.

Recommendations: (open proposals from Synod 2011)

1. FRCSA contribution towards art 11 increases from R220 per member per year in 2011 to R240 in 2012 , R250 in 2013 and R275 in 2014.
2. Institution of churches is dependant on a certain level of financial accountability and the ability in supporting their minister's basic needs.
3. Church councils should determine the stipend of their minister according to their own circumstances.
4. Implement the principle that only non basic elements of a minister's stipend will be supported by Art 11. This will be done in conjunction of the respective church councils.
5. Art 11 will not search for additional assistance abroad but will maintain current support structures in Canada and Australia. We need to get less dependant on foreign support.

The deputies pray that our Lord may bless the synod with his Spirit so that all decisions may be to the glory of His Name.

The deputies
Br Marius Bijker (scribe)
Br Wolter Miske (convenor)
Br Harry Pouwels

15 Feb. 2012

Appendix 2: Report Deputies ad article 19 Church Order

Report to Synod March 2012. – Art 19 – Deputy Needy Students FRCSA

Introduction:

This report should be read in conjunction with the Art 19 report synod 2011 since the approval of the recommendations requested in that report were postponed to the ad-hoc synod planned after the Indaba held by Deputies Financial Review.

Synopsis:

As from late 2010, Art 19 has taken over responsibility for the financial support previously supported by the Mission deputies. Since then Art19 has almost depleted our reserves and as per Synod report for 2011 our financial situation was not great. This has fortunately changed in the past few months, giving us some time to analyze, discuss and implement better support models as presented in this document.

In the previous report for Synod 2011, we have indicated that the current model is not sustainable and have therefore received instruction from the Synod to rethink the current working methods and current strategy and budgets.

The current proposal that needs to be discussed would be assist with the actual study fees and direct related (books & material & travel) costs only, excluding living and other diverse costs. This has been discussed in the Indaba and forms part of ensuring a sustainable support model.

We thank our Provider and Owner of all our possessions and gifts that He gave us the means to support the needy students in 2011 and that the budgeted figures are looking considerably better compared to a year ago.

Soli Deo gloria

Financial overview:

Below is a cash-flow indicating the present situation as well as the expected future figures.

Overview of Cash flow - Art.19 Needy students (Jan 2012)					
Uitgawes	10%				
Student	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Bongani Ndlovu	R -	R -	R -	R -	
Chris Willemse	R 6 000.00	R -	R -	R -	
Jacob Mnisi	R 54 100.00	R 59 510.00	R 65 461.00	R 72 007.10	
John Mahlangu (betaal deur SK Maranath)	R -	R -	R -	R -	
Oscar Makobe	R 87 580.00	R 96 338.00	R 105 971.80	R 116 568.98	
Solomon Makwakwa	R 54 100.00	R 59 510.00	R 65 461.00	R 72 007.10	
	R 201 780.00	R 215 358.00	R 236 893.80	R 260 583.18	
Vaste bedrag per siel	R 65.00	R 65.00	R 65.00	R 65.00	
Bedrag per siel per student	R -	R -	R -	R -	
Aantal siele	1350	1384	1418	1454	
Koers euro/rand	9.50	9.50	9.50	9.50	
# students	4	3	3	3	
Inkomste scenario 1: Ndl betaal vaste be	2012	2013	2014	2015	
SDSA verpligting in 2011	R -	R -	R -	R -	
Kollektes hulpbehoewende studente	R 87 750.00	R 89 943.75	R 92 192.34	R 94 497.15	
DVN & ZDZA	R 140 000.00	R 145 000.00	R 153 000.00	R 160 000.00	
	R -	R -	R -	R -	
	R 227 750.00	R 234 943.75	R 245 192.34	R 254 497.15	
Oor/-Tekort	R 25 970.00	R 19 585.75	R 8 298.54	R -6 086.03	

Positive trends:

The situation is better than presented in the report to synod 2011 mainly due to the following

1. Support for Chris Willemse has stopped. (Decreased from 5 to 4 students)
2. An agreement was made with SDNL and DVN (ZZA) where they committed themselves to assisting Dep. Art. 19 in funding for the next 3 years.
3. As per financial overview, we will have a reserve of about R20 000 per year for the next months, but still not sufficient to accommodate new students on the current level of support (full support vs study-related costs only)

Risks

The actual value of 10% inflation cost might be slightly inflated, but the current model (even with funding from abroad) is not sustainable as this scenario doesn't include any new students for the following three years.

Although the funds from the Netherlands have been agreed, the contracting needs to be finalized before payments can be expected.

If additional requests for support are made we need to evaluate the scenario and already had to decline support for br. S Mathokoane in May 2011.

The increasing education costs as well as possibilities of support for brothers that needs to go to more expensive theological institutions (Mukanyo, George Witfield vs institutions abroad) will have a significant impact on our already low reserves.

The current risk would be the actual funds available and to build up a reserve instead of working on the minimal cash available.

Future support reduction:

The proposal to implement the principle that only study related costs will be covered by means of Art19 support.

The actual support should be determined by the other available sources for the students and cannot be granted automatically. Although every application will be considered individually, we have a responsibility to ensure that all the applications are evaluated based on the same principles.

We would also like to reduce our dependency from foreign support as it is not guaranteed and that the responsibility should ultimately be moved back to the student / family, instead of the "guaranteed" funding processes of the past.

Recommendations: (open proposals from Synod 2011)

6. FRCSA contribution towards art 19 increases to R65 per year (instead of the original R103 requested)
7. Deputies Art.19 to be only responsible for supporting needy students in bursaries limited to the actual study costs.
8. Current students: This approach will have to be implemented over a period of time and cannot be executed immediately.
9. Students, parents and churches will be encouraged by Deputies to accept their respective responsibilities in this regard.
10. The channel to follow when funds are needed to study should be parent-church-bond of churches (Art.19), not the other way round.
11. A reserve fund should be implemented in order to assist possible new students in need.

The deputies pray that our Lord may bless the synod with his Spirit so that all decisions may be to the glory of His Name.

The deputies

E de wit
A de Lange
M Bijker
A Boon

20 Feb. 2012

Appendix 3: Report Deputies Financial Review

Financial Review Deputies (FRD) – Report to Synod - March 2012.

A. Synopsis:

The concern by synod 2011 regarding the direct financial impact on the churches due to a 35% requested increase in synod contributions, led to a healthy debate and a valuable inward assessment of how the federation values and utilises the financial gifts. Fortunately, due to changes in circumstances in the financial situation of the various deputies the short term financial shortfalls were reduced so much so that till 2014 the deputies will be able to do their work with a limited increase in contributions from the churches. However the words "short term" should be emphasised.

Those who were present at the Indaba realised that the Lord sets limits often in terms of funds. We are living in a very diverse country and the difference in wealth and income has to be accepted and will be evident in the stipends of ministers. It should also be made practical in terms of the synod contributions: the contributions should be differentiated based on the income or contribution level of a congregation.

On the other hand it was highlighted how to use the finances in an accountable manner as part of our stewardship. This implies that we should be very cautious where and how we utilise the funds, based on proper thought through and approved plans. The other side of the coin is that all church members should contribute according to ability. This ability can only be determined by church councils.

Adjustments made on budgets by the synod, as well as some more changes by the deputies in the past three months, the synod contributions are attainable: only a 12% increase for 2011 and an 8% increase for 2012.

Although good progress has been made at the Indaba, the objectives set out in the mandate of FRD have not yet been achieved and a follow up Indaba is planned for May/June 2012.

There are already some proposals to be made to Synod March 2012, which if approved, will set the direction for a detailed report Synod 2014 Lord willing.

B. Mandate (Acts Synod 2011, art. 18.2)

1. To investigate the overall financial impact of the budget proposals of various deputies involved, on the churches;
2. To investigate the financial situation of each deputyship and to encourage deputies to rethink their current working methods in order to develop a financially sustainable system;
3. To make proposals in the form of a working document to be discussed in an Indaba during September/October 2011, where all the relevant parties are involved;
4. To appoint a competent facilitator for the Indaba;
5. To coordinate the preparation of the Indaba with MDSA;
6. To report back to an ad-hoc synod during February 2012 and propose an overall strategy to be discussed and decided on by this synod;

In addition the synod referred the FRD to the MDSA report to Synod 2011, in which the reasons for such an Indaba were spelled out in more detail.

From the above as well as the MDSA report, FRD formulated 4 Key Objectives to be achieved.

Key Objectives

1. A long term viability and financial sustainability view of all the mission work and related deputy activities within the FRCSA.

- Is a single FRCSA vision, not only for mission work but including all other aspects, necessary and who would be the custodian of such a vision?
- Can we manage the growth as anticipated in the mission vision?
- Are there other methodologies making sustainable growth possible.
- Are we as small church federation not taking on too much?
- Is there a need for the FRD after the ad-hoc synod?
- Should we have a holistic view on the work in the FRCSA?
- Have we got the manpower to see all the work through?
- We operate according to the CO of Dordt, also as far as equality and caring for each other is concerned (Art 11, 13, 19)...

2. The financial contribution ability of the FRCSA in respect of the 4 deputies.

- Are we as small church federation not taking on too much?
- Avoid 30% increase in overall contributions.
- The financial situation is so serious that timely action is of the utmost importance.

3. The role of our sister churches abroad in the church federation's work.

- Is a central fundraising body needed?
- Should we go for boundless fundraising relying on worldwide ecumenical contacts?
- Can we ethically call upon churches abroad to support the various deputies in their financial shortfall?

4. Rethink the deputy's current approaches and re-budget before end 2011.

- Re drafted approaches/working methods/policies for the 4 deputies by updated Synod reports.
- Proposed guidelines/budgets for 4 deputies.
- New contribution amounts for churches.

C. Financial overview:**Financial impact on FRCSA**

The overall financial impact of the budget proposals tabled by the various deputies at the 2011 synod is shown below:

Year	Synod Contributions proposed at 2011 synod						Increase
	MDSA	Art 11	Art 19	Th. Train.	Federal co:	Total	%
2010	R 120	R 200	R 20	R 110	R 20	R 470	
2011	R 120	R 200	R 20	R 110	R 20	R 470	0%
2012	R 162	R 250	R 113	R 90	R 20	R 635	35%
2013	R 175	R 250	R 124	R 90	R 20	R 659	4%
2014	R 190	R 250	R 137	R 90	R 20	R 687	4%

At synod the 2011 old figures and the proposed 2012 figures were compared and the 35% increase gave rise to the concern if the churches could meet the requested amount.

Financial dependency on sister churches abroad.

At present the deputies (Art 11, Art 19, MDSA and Curators) of the FRCSA are dependent on \pm 90% of their income from sister churches. However if mission work is excluded from the equation, it is \pm 70%. The dependency of the FRCSA on sister churches abroad is often mentioned but it is skewed because it is in essence Holland financing mission work in SA. Mission money is not a dependency but part of the agreement between churches and should therefore be excluded from the figure.

The biggest portion of the support from abroad is for art. 11, however art. 19 also plans to get 75% from overseas. This is still a reason of concern as well as a potential ethical issue.

D. Indaba

Objectives

The synod instructed the FRD to organise an Indaba to discuss the financial situation. The intention was to discuss and debate the situation at hand involving all churches and to discuss a way forward in how to address the challenges of our church federation. In general the Indaba was well represented by all churches. Unfortunately, Belhar was not represented and Bellville was represented on a lower level.

No working document was made available prior to the Indaba as instructed by synod, DFR though it wiser to have various papers to be presented and to have a proper debate about a number of underlying biblical principles.

Overview of deputies.

All the deputies presented their views and situation.

1 Mission Deputies

The MDSA raised the potential problem and called for an Indaba to discuss the financial and sustainability issues within the church federation. This resulted in a very healthy debate where everyone's responsibility how to use money within the churches was addressed. Secondly, an increase or decrease of even R50 per year per member will not upset mission work since SA's contribution amounts to only 5% of the total mission budget. The mission is therefore depending on our supporting churches in Holland for 95% of the financial contributions. These funds are coming in as promised but are severely influenced by the rate of exchange. Due to positive foreign exchange rates, MDSA should report a slight surplus for the 2011 calendar year, indicating that the short term finances are fairly under control.

2. Needy Churches

During the past two decades the European ministers were properly supported and cared for based on Western standards. Unfortunately, we are living in a very diverse country and difference in wealth and income has to be accepted. The norm is "taking proper care" and not to compare stipends within the federation as the norm. Therefore stipends should be based on what the needs are and not what the minister wants. This rule applies for all ministers. Secondly, it is a biblical principle to support a minister based on the average income levels of the congregation he is serving. Lastly, there are some elements of the stipend that are not related to the income level of the congregation and should be supported by the churches via art 11. Following this approach, the support by art 11 to needy churches will slowly reduce. There should be an objective to be less dependent on foreign support.

3. Theological training

The budgeted contribution was reduced from R110 per member to R90 for 2012. This was based on the huge surplus close to R485000 at the end of 2010. It was also the first time that a financial overview was presented at synod. Unfortunately, currently there is no approved written plan with budgeted amounts available.

4. Needy Students

The expectations generated by the theological students i.t.o. support to their studies, the subsequent calling as a minister are unrealistic: the federation just hasn't got the capability and capacity to call everyone and to cater for all who passed their classis exams.

Support for students via Art 19 is often made available far too easy; the student is supposed to request support from other support systems first before applying for financial support from Art 19. Although students in theology can be supported, the responsibility regarding the financing of their studies lies with the individual. It also means that if a call is not coming forth, he has to look for a job to sustain himself.

E. Outcomes of Indaba

- "Involvement" and "teach on stewardship": stood out during the discussions, and churches have to focus more on this topic.
 - In terms of involvement, one needs to involve mission points (congregations) from an early stage to start to contribute for the deputies in the FRCSA.
 - The Indaba participants accepted the emphasis on accountability and stewardship. The Lord is providing opportunities but there are also limitations. We all need to exercise our responsibility towards the work of the deputies. Although the participants agreed on the emphasis on accountability and stewardship, it has to be taught to the congregations.
- As a result of the Indaba, there seems to be consensus that we have to accept differences in wealth and income.
- Due to the difference in living standards, the synod contributions should be differentiated for the different congregations based on contribution levels per congregation.
- Implementation of differentiated contribution levels for different congregations should be considered, based on the different contribution abilities of the congregations. FRD analysed the average income level of all the congregations, using some basic assumptions. This study can be used as a basic model for explaining the principle of differentiated contribution levels,
- The actual contribution ability per congregation should be established by church councils in order to enable a just differentiation system.
- Based on estimated figures and a basic model, it seems as if the churches do not contribute to ability to the synod contributions, in fact the increases requested could easily be carried by the churches if based on a contribution ability model (this does not imply that all requested budgets should be approved).
- The newly proposed increases for contributions by the churches as proposed by the various deputies in their report to synod 2011, are attainable. Changes made by synod as well as changes made by the respective deputed should also be taken in account. The FRD should therefore suggest that the new proposals can be adopted for the 2012 – 2014 period.
- Newly instituted churches should also be involved in the financial contributions to the FRCSA. According to synod decisions that should already have been implemented by means of collections. However the new proposed model of differentiated contributions should be applied.

- Concerning the surplus funds of Curators and their proposal to still collect money from the churches a few questions were raised:
 - o Can it ethically be justified to maintain unused funds while at the same time applying for financial support from sister churches?
 - o Should the contribution for Curators not be stopped for the time being?
- Although no decision was taken there are two views
 - o once you start with a proper Theological Training effort, it will cost a lot of money.
 - o The other view was that a proper plan and strategy should first be drafted and approved before money is allocated.
- A proposal to convene another (follow-up) Indaba to discuss the remaining issues was accepted. The discussions in the next Indaba should enable deputies to propose long term strategies to Synod 2014. Deputies FRD should be instructed to co-ordinate that process and to make certain proposals, based on their findings to Synod 2014.
- Often church councils are not aware of the needs and even shortfalls of deputies. The above led to a proposal for the ad-hoc synod to add instructions to the mandates of the relevant deputies to communicate information concerning needed funding to church councils on a continuous basis.
- Synod should enforce that all deputy reports have a proper thought through plan and a five year budget focussing on sustainability. Criteria like dependency on foreign money and the federation's contributions ability should play an important part before deputies' budgets are approved.

F. Recommendations to synod.

1. Approve the below mentioned contribution amounts (per member per year) for the next 3 years till the next synod i.e. 2014. There after the proposed differentiated model for contributions should be used if approved by Synod 2014.

Year	Synod Contributions - after synod and Indaba						Increase	
	MDSA	Art 11	Art 19	Th. Train.	Federal co:	Total	%	
2010	R 120	R 200	R 20	R 110	R 20	R 470		
2011	R 130	R 220	R 65	R 90	R 20	R 525	12%	
2012	R 150	R 240	R 65	R 90	R 20	R 565	8%	
2013	R 175	R 250	R 80	R 90	R 20	R 615	9%	
2014	R 190	R 275	R 80	R 90	R 20	R 655	7%	

Although Art 19 proposed to decrease the contribution amount to R35 per member per year (e-mail dated 14 Feb 2012), we propose to stay with R65 and build up a reserve to be less dependant on foreign support.

Grounds: The increase per year is slightly higher than inflation but attainable according to the feedback received at the Indaba.

2. Since the majority of the needy churches do not contribute, they should be encouraged to contribute on the differentiated model discussed at the Indaba as from 2012.

Grounds: Needy churches can only request support if they also give according to ability. The present collection contribution model does not work.

3. Mission points (preaching points) should also be taught to contribute to these deputies, using the differentiated model as guidance.

Grounds: Make synod contributions part of mission points from the start as the mission point is part of the church federation.

4. Synod should add an instruction to the mandates of the relevant deputies (MDSA, Art 11 & 19, Curators) to communicate information, concerning needed funding to church councils on a continuous basis in the form of an annual report.

Grounds:

Often church councils are not aware of the needs and shortfalls of the various deputies and cannot put these needs to the Lord and church members.

5. Appoint deputies FRD with the mandate to finalise the original mandate and the 4 main objectives set out in this report and to report to synod 2014 under the applicable synod rules. This could include Indabas, meetings with church councils, deputies or other commissions within the FRCSA to enable them to prepare a proper report for the 2014 synod.

Grounds:

The short term financial issue has been addressed, but the sustainability of the work within the FRCSA has not yet been addressed. It is of great importance that the various deputies apply their minds towards a collective goal or mission so that all the deputies can work out a strategic plan towards that collective goal.

6. Synod should approve the principle of a differentiated contribution model, based on the contribution ability of the congregations. FRD should be mandated to develop a workable contribution model for all the churches within the FRCSA.

Grounds: The present flat rate is not appropriate seeing the differences in wealth and income between churches.

7. Synod should instruct all church councils to establish their contribution ability (based on the model presented at the Indaba). They should cooperate with the FRD to enable them to propose a new model for differentiated synod contributions as from 2014.

Grounds: The church councils are ultimately responsible that contributions to the deputies within the FRCSA are made according to the member's contribution ability.

8. Synod should enforce that all deputies should present a proper motivated and sustainable operational plan together with at least a three year budget. Criteria such as dependency on foreign money, the federation's contributions ability, availability of manpower etc. should play an important role before deputies' mandates and budgets can be approved by synod.

Grounds: As part of our stewardship, we need to be accountable how and for what purpose we use the financial gifts provided to us. Sustainability can only be considered if all deputies present a proper budget, including running cost and capital expenditure, manpower and the like have been considered.

9. The contribution for Curators should be postponed till a proper motivated and sustainable operational plan together with a five year budget has been presented for approval by synod.

Grounds: Currently there is no proper plan and no budget available. Also refer to recommendation 9.

10. The R90 per year contribution earmarked for Curators should be allocated to Art 11 to build up a small reserve as well as to make us less dependent on foreign donation and support.
11. Remind all churches to pay contributions quarterly as per previous synod decisions. This will improve cash-flow and give deputies a more steady income.

Annexures:

Minutes Indaba 11&12 Nov 2011 with Appendices

Financial Review Deputies

14 Feb. 2012

Ronald Meeske

Harry Pouwels

Harm Snijder

Appendix 4: Letter of Deputies Curators to Deputies Financial Review



DEPUTIES CURATORS OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Psalm 119:105

Deputies Curators
p/a Secretary
Tineke van Alten
Walter Avenue 1295, Waverley 0186, Pretoria
Email: hhvanalten@vgkmaranata.org.za
Tel: +27 12 332 3256

To: Financial Review Deputies
Free Reformed Churches in South Africa

From: Deputies Theological Training (Curators)

Date: 27 March 2012

Subject: **FRD Report to Synod March 2012**

Dear brothers,

At our meeting of 15 March the FRD Report to Synod March 2012 was discussed.

While agreeing with your general concern about the sustainability of the bond of churches, we were surprised and concerned to read recommendations 9 and 10. We would like to make the following comments on your recommendations:

1. For a number of reasons we were not able to finalise our planning for future theological training in line with the decisions by synod 2006 before the March 2012 synod. In view of the various options and their consequences, an *indaba* on theological training will be scheduled for August 2012. Immediately afterwards a strategic plan and detailed budget will be submitted.
2. To recommend a reallocation of contributions to Curators towards Art. 11 would limit the choices of Curators with regard to the most effective and efficient approach to theological training. Would we recommend that a dedicated person should be appointed for the management of theological training, even for a limited period, the surplus would be soon exhausted.

3. Your proposals 9 and 10 could negatively impact on our ability to fulfill synod's mandate to ensure theological training that answers the content of courses, outsourcing of training and minister's profile agreed on in 2006.
4. In general it makes no sense to build up a reserve for Art 11 to the detriment of Theological Training. Would the Curators not submit a strategic plan to the next synod, that synod may take its own decisions, based on the discussions and submissions by Deputies Theological Training.
5. We are particularly concerned about your decision to make such far-reaching recommendations without consultation with deputies Curators. Had we discussed the matter before the finalization of your report, your recommendations could have included conditions that would assist us in our strategic planning.

Yours in Christ,

Tineke van Alten

Secretary Deputies Theological Training

Appendix 5: Persverslag van die Ad Hoc Sinode 2012

Ad-hoc Sinode van die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (VGKSA), Pretoria, 14 April 2012.

Persverslag

Op grond van besluite van Sinode 2011 van die VGKSA is 'n ad-hoc sinode saamgeroep met die doel om uitstaande sake af te handel, insake die volhoubaarheid van die benutting van finansiële – en mankragbronne deur die VGKSA se deputate Art. 11 KO (hulpbehoewende kerke), Art. 19 KO (hulpbehoewende studente), Kuratore (teologiese opleiding) en sendingsdeputate (Handelinge van Sinode 2011, artt. 18, 22, 25, 26 en 29). Sinode 2011 het vir dié doel 'n nuwe deputaatskap ingestel (Deputate vir Finansiële Herbeoordeling/Financial Review Deputies, verder FRD genoem) wat die mandaat gekry het om die voorbereidende werk vir die ad-hoc sinode te doen in samewerking met die hierbo genoemde deputate (Handelinge van Sinode 2011, art. 36 punt 19). Die VGK Pretoria het op versoek van Sinode 2011 se moderamen, en met goedkeuring van die, deur Sinode 2011 benoemde roepende kerk, die VGK Betal, as saamroepende kerk opgetree.

Opening

Namens die kerkraad van Pretoria het ds. J.J. Drijfhout in sy openingstoespraak die woorde van Ef. 4: 1 – 6 aan die afgevaardigdes voorgehou: *“Ek vermaan julle dan,, om te wandel waardig die roeping waarmee julle geroep is, met alle nederigheid en sagmoedigheid, met lankmoedigheid, terwyl julle mekaar in liefde verdra en ernstig strew om die eenheid van die Gees te bewaar deur die band van die vrede.”*

Geloofsbriewe en Moderamen

Die afvaardigingsbriewe is ondersoek en korrek bevind. As moderamen is die volgende broeders verkies:

- voorsitter: ds. H.H. van Alten
- ondervoorsitter: oud. C. Roose
- skriba: ds. P.G. Boon

Alle afgevaardigdes en aanwesige deputate het, op versoek van die voorsitter, hulle instemming met die Drie Formuliere van Eenheid betuig deur van hulle sitplekke op te staan.

Verwelkoming deputate

Alle relevante deputaatskappe was verteenwoordig in die sinodevergadering. Die deputate is hartlik verwelkom. Van diegene wat as adviseurs genooi is om die vergadering by te woon was niemand aanwesig nie.

Werkswyse

Die sinode het besluit om met die behandeling van die verslag van FRD te begin omdat dié verslag 'n oorkoepelende opsomming van die ander deputate se uitstaande - en nuwe sake ingesluit het. Waar in dié verslag na spesifieke deputaatskappe verwys is, het die sinode dié deputate se verslae by die bespreking ingesluit en, vir sover moontlik, afgehandel. Op die manier kon ook die ander deputateverslae binne die raamwerk van 'n totaalbeeld van die VGKSA se mankrag en finansiële situasie beoordeel en afgehandel word.

Deputate Finansiële Herbeoordeling

FRD het d.m.v. kontakte met die ander vier deputaatskappe en ook deur middel van 'n Indaba die voorbereidende werk vir die ad-hoc sinode gedoen. In hulle verslag is gestel dat die kort termyn doelstellings tot so 'n mate bereik is dat die ad-hoc sinode op grond daarvan sinvolle besluite kan neem vir die tydperk tot die volgende algemene sinode, DV in 2014.

Lang termyn doelstellings is egter nie bereik nie en verdere aktiwiteite, met die oog op aanbevelings vir 'n lang termyn strategie vir Sinode 2014, is aanbeveel. Sake soos betrokkenheid van hulpbehoewende kerke en betrokkenheid van nog nie-geïnstitueerde sendingsgemeentes binne die raamwerk van ons Godgegewe rentmeesterskap, meer disipline by die hantering van finansies deur plaaslike gemeentes, meer disipline by die opstel van begrotings en toekenning van finansiële steun deur deputate, en gedifferensieerde gemeentelike bydraes op grond van verskil in finansiële drakrag is genoem as sake wat aandag verdien.

Die sinode het besluit om:

- die FRDeputate te herbenoem tot die volgende algemene sinode met die opdrag om verder te werk aan 'n voorstel vir 'n volhoubare beleid insake finansies, mankrag en ander relevante sake, vir voorlegging aan Sinode 2014. die volgende voorgestelde verhogings van gemeentelike bydraes vir die jare 2012 – 2014 goed te keur:

Gemeentelike bydraes per siel (R)

Jaar	Sending	Art. 11	Art. 19	Kuratore	Kerkverb.	Totaal	% verhoging
2011	130	220	65	90	20	525	
2012	150	285	65	45	20	565	8
2013	175	295	80	45	20	615	9
2014	190	320	80	45	20	655	7

- om die naam van die deputaatskap te verander na Deputate Volhoubaarheid (Deputies Sustainability)

Deputate Artikel 11 KO

Deputate het 'n opgedateerde verslag vir die ad-hoc sinode ingedien met nuwe aanbevelings insake hantering van finansiële ondersteuning vir hulpbehoewende kerke. Die sinode besluit:

- dat die plaaslike gemeente in beginsel vir die basiese lewensonderhoud van hulle predikant verantwoordelik is en dat slegs nie-basiese koste-items vir finansiering deur deputate in aanmerking kom;
- om bogenoemde besluit oor tyd in te faseer;
- om die helfte van die jaarlikse bydraes vir Deputate Kuratore vir die jare 2012 – 2014 aan deputate art. 11 toe te wys.

Deputate Artikel 19 KO

Deputate het 'n opgedateerde verslag vir die ad-hoc sinode ingedien met sekere nuwe aanbevelings vir die hantering van ondersteuning aan hulpbehoewende teologiese studente.

Die sinode besluit:

- dat finansiële ondersteuning vir studente in die toekoms beperk word tot studieverwante koste-items;
- dat die nuwe beleid oor tyd ingefaseer moet word;
- dat vir finansiële ondersteuning van studente die volgende orde van ondersteuningsbronne gehandhaaf moet word: ouers, plaaslike gemeente, kerkverband (Dep. Art. 19 KO);
- dat slegs dié studente vir ondersteuning in aanmerking kom wat deur Deputate Kuratore goedgekeur is.

Deputate Kuratore

Deputate het by hulle oorspronklike verslag aan Sinode 2011 gebly. Tydens die sinodevergadering is egter wel nuwe inligting verskaf wat 'n impak op die besluitvorming gehad het.

Deputate beskik oor aansienlike fondse wat in die toekoms moontlik benodig sal word vir die finansiering van nuwe opleidingsinisiatiewe, maar wat op hierdie stadium nie gebruik word nie. Een van die nuwe inisiatiewe waarby deputate betrokke was in opdrag van sinode 2011, die GTOI (Gereformeerde Teologiese Opleidingsinisiatief; in Engels RTTI), het volgens die nuutste inligting deur die mat geval. Dit wil dus voorkom of die fondse waarskynlik nie binne die volgende paar jare benodig sal word nie.

Omdat deputate art. 11 KO sukkel om aan hulle finansiële verpligtings te voldoen, het die sinode besluit om vir die oorblywende tydperk tot Sinode 2014 die helfte (R 45) van die voorgestelde bydraes vir deputate Kuratore aan deputate art. 11 KO toe te wys.

Afsluiting

Nadat die sinodesake in 'n goeie, broederlike gees bespreek en afgehandel is, sluit die voorsitter die ad-hoc sinode 2012 met dank aan ons hemelse Vader wat die afgevaardigdes en deputate deur sy Gees gelei het.

Voorsitter: ds. H.H. van Alten

Ondervoorsitter: oud. C. Roose

Skriba: ds. P.G. Boon